

**Meeting of the Board of Directors of the
State House Visitor's Center and Gift Shop
Wednesday, August 21, 2013 at 2:00 P.M.
Providence Warwick Convention & Visitors Bureau
G-Tech Building
10 Memorial Blvd.
Providence, RI 02903**

Meeting Notes

- 1. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Kristen Adamo at 2:02 P.M. with the following members present: Kristen Adamo, Jon Stevens, and Sue Ellen Kroll. Staff members present included Paul Caranci, Stacy DiCola (Secretary of State's Office) and Jess Unger (Governor's Office)**
- 2. Introduction of those present was dispensed with.**
- 3. Upon a motion by Sue Ellen Kroll, seconded by Kristen Adamo, the minutes of the July 29, 2013 were unanimously approved as submitted.**
- 4. Staffing Issue – Stacy DiCola and Kristen Adamo reported an issue with the J&W students whose resumes were submitted for review. Stacy has been unable to speak with anyone at the University and phone calls to arrange student interview have not been returned. Discussions are underway with representatives of the Hospitality College but preliminary results indicate that the J&W considers this**

assignment to fall under the retail section and not the hospitality section of their internship program. Stacy is checking into the feasibility of using interns from the State Government Internship Program. It was also suggested that we reach out to other colleges and universities for interns. Paul Caranci offered to reach out to Ms. Galinski from J&W one more time while Jon Stevens said he will call Bonnie Bennett, the Vice President and General Counsel for J&W.

5. Stacy DiCola suggested that the opening of the Gift Shop be delayed until at least November 1, 2013 so as to provide sufficient time to overcome the staffing and inventory issues. Upon a motion by SueEllen Kroll, seconded by Kristen Adamo, the Committee voted unanimously to set November 1, 2013 as the new target date for the opening of the Visitor's Center/Gift Shop.

6. Stacy DiCola reported that she reviewed the POS system offered by two separate companies. The first is the Square, a device that plugs into a cell phone and allows for credit card sales to be made at a cost of either a flat fee of \$275.00/month or a transactional fee of 2.74% fee per transaction. There is no support system or training program that comes with the Square. The second company that she spoke to is Citibank which offers its First Data Program. Citibank is on the Master Price Agreement (MPA) at the Division of Purchasing. First Data offers two options; an outright purchase of the program for \$5,800 or a monthly lease for \$190 per month for a term of 4 years. The First Data program is a complete POS system that includes inventory, barcode, register, a four-year full warranty and 24 hour customer service. Fees range from between 0 and 3% of each

transaction. Stacy will contact the company to determine if it will be possible to enter into a 2-year lease arrangement.

7. Mission – Jess Unger suggested that the Committee develop an overall mission statement for the Gift Shop. This will help to guide the decision making process for inventory. She suggested that the Committee consider 1) a focus on State House and its collections (following a museum shop model), 2) using the assets of Rhode Island as a source of inspiration, and 3) Focusing on locally made objects (following the model of places like Craftland). Jess suggested that these objectives are not mutually exclusive, but that language should be agreed upon in order to move forward.

8. Inventory – Stacy DiCola and Kristen Adamo met with representatives of Chemart and viewed their products. This is a Rhode Island company that offers a quick turnaround of items. Several sample items were distributed for review. The company offers a way to grow revenue by creating items in a series. For example, Christmas tree ornaments can be made so that they become an annual collectable that people will continue to purchase over time. The ornaments could include interior architectural features of the State House, etc. Adamo and DiCola suggested working with local artists to design their interpretation of the Anchor (state symbol) and vary that theme each year. These items can be purchased for between \$8-12 and will retail for about \$30. Similar items in other states sell out each year.

Jess Unger offered a slide presentation depicting several items that she suggested offering in the Gift Shop. After speaking to the

manager of the New Hampshire State House Gift Shop and to Kathleen Vanderveer of the Newport Historical Society Gift Shop, she pulled from different inventory sources to develop the suggestions contained in the slide show. The presentation is based on a total available dollar amount of \$8,000 for inventory. It suggests an amount of each item that would be purchased, the dollar amount spent on the item and the percentage of the total available funding to be spent on each individual item.

The items contained in the slide presentation include:

Marble coasters Tile magnets Post cards

13 X 19 Posters Pendants on glass Cuff links

Euro stickers Pens/pencils refrigerator magnets

Small State flags Historic document repro's. Drinking glasses

Dish towels

Ms. Unger also reported that the turnaround time for the items presented is generally 4-6 weeks.

Jon Stevens suggested that, working backwards from the new tentative opening date of November 1st, orders would need to be placed by September 15th. Kristen Adamo and SueEllen Kroll will work together on finalizing the list and will make a recommendation at the next meeting. They will use an available inventory dollar amount of \$5,000 for planning purposes.

9. Jess Unger reported that DOA secured a vendor for the construction of the bookshelves that will adorn the walls on the right side of the room only. The shelves will be glass and will possibly have locked storage underneath. The cost will be paid from the

Capital Improvement Account. The DOA will assume the cost of wiring, and they have already worked with Integrated Securities to have a security camera installed. It is possible that DOA will also cover the cost of the brochure racks and any other incidental furnishings and improvements to the room. The DOA is also in the process of obtaining a new door for the room.

10. Stacy DiCola reported that the desk will be installed on August 29th.

11. A question was raised as to the ability of the Visitor's Center to enter into a consignment agreement with those who the Visitor's Center Oversight Committee saw fit to stock their merchandise. Jonathan reminded the Committee members that they have adopted a consignment policy that assumes the Visitors Center would realize a 50% commission on the retail price of items purchased. The board believes that this arrangement is of great benefit: the Committee reserves the right to approve or reject any proposal, and this arrangement enables the Visitor's Center to offer quality inventory without any outlay of scarce resources.

He has also noted that he requested and received a legal opinion from Matt Smith of the Dept of Administration, who has indicated that the Committee is available to review proposals by book authors, etc on a case by case basis. He will forward the opinion to the board by email.

12. The next meeting will be scheduled for Monday September 9, 2013 at 1:00 P.M. at the Providence Warwick Convention and Visitors Bureau.

13. The meeting was adjourned at 3:14 P.M.